

Jody Ian Goeler  
February 21, 2013  
Testimony at the LOB

Good morning. My name is Jody Goeler, and I am the superintendent of Region 14, Bethlehem and Woodbury where we house one of the finest Agriscience programs in the state, if not the country – The Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program. (Founded in 1920)

Every morning I arrive in my district and see the most engaged, eager to learn, career – minded, highly motivated young men and women actively learning and accountable to the high standards of our program, their teachers, and themselves.

As I see our students interact with their peers and other adults, I can't help but think of the various educational reform initiatives currently before us: *The Common Core State Standards, Secondary School Reform, CAPSS's Educational Transformation Project, our efforts to teach students 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.*

Through our Agriscience program, our students are already actively engaged in creating their *student success plans* (an upcoming requirement through Secondary School Reform), and they have access to a program with a clear set of priorities for guaranteeing *universal student success* and a system that accommodates parent and student choice regarding *pathways to learning* (an expectation of the Educational Transformation Project).

In addition, our Agriscience program, which serves our students from Bethlehem and Woodbury and 23 surrounding towns remains a model for teaching *21 Century skills* and *dispositions*: Using real-world digital and other research tools to access, evaluate, and effectively apply information appropriate for authentic tasks; working independently and collaboratively to solve problems and accomplish goals; demonstrating innovation, flexibility and adaptability in thinking patterns, work habits, and working/learning conditions, and so much more.

In short, our Agriscience program should be the poster child for everything worthy of our consideration, and certainly funding, for improving public education. We have the program; we just need the support to ensure our students and future students have greater opportunities to benefit from what a state of the art Agriscience center can provide.

Because of the lack of operating funds we receive from the state, it is difficult to cover the costs of educating our current students, and we are not able to expand our program to accept more, even though we have the physical capacity to do so. The state needs to increase the per pupil funding to become more in line with the other schools of choice including *charter schools*, *Magnet schools* and *Vo-Tech schools*.

Finally, I have to add that if my Agriscience Director, Bill Davenport, the 2003-04 Connecticut State Teacher of the Year and highly recognized and tireless advocate for fair and adequate funding for this tremendous educational resource and these

extraordinary students, who have taken time out from the studies to patiently wait to make their pleas again this year, cannot convince you to adopt your own ECS Task Force School Choice Funding recommendation into the Governor's proposed budget, I do not know what will.

On behalf of the students who thrive in our program and those who hope to someday, I ask that this inequity be addressed now.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Jody Ian Goeler

Superintendent

Regional School District #14

Woodbury/Bethlehem

